



MASSP

Michigan Association of
Secondary School Principals

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Mark Thomas, President
Jim Ballard, Executive Director

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Dear Colleague:

This morning State Superintendent of Schools, Mike Flanagan, is publicly presenting his high school graduation requirement recommendations to the State Board of Education. I was fortunate to represent the MASSP on a task force that conducted research and provided data to assist the superintendent in formulating his proposal. After reading this fax and studying the recommendations more closely, I would invite you to join me in supporting Superintendent Flanagan's efforts. This is not a RADICAL proposal – it is a RESPONSIBLE one! As an Association we need to be leaders in improving our P-16 system!

Without question, there is a body of research and data that tells us what is best for the academic preparation of our children. We also are aware of the 21st century skills our children will need to thrive both personally and professionally. The Superintendent's proposal addresses these areas while still taking into account the biggest hot button in the looming debate – local control. These recommendations respect the need for and history of local control but also take steps to insure that all children, regardless of zip code, will have access to a foundation curriculum that better prepares them for successful futures. Michigan's educational data reflects that while some of our kids are doing well, there are obvious gaps/differences in our K-16 curriculum that are negatively affecting student achievement. This plan speaks to Michigan's need to align our standards and benchmarks across the state at the high school level.

In one respect our society designed a similar solution long ago. Medical research taught us that we could improve the health of individual children, as well as the health of the community as a whole, and also reduce potential medical costs by requiring immunizations. Please think of this proposal as an "educational and intellectual" immunization for all of our children. It is the same principle. A child can still see their family doctor (local district) to be treated, but if any of them lack the means for any reason, free medical care and immunizations will be provided. All of Michigan's children currently have access to immunizations and in the same respect they should have equal access to a curriculum that promises hope for their futures.

I respect that we all have different situations in our schools and communities and this proposal may create some challenges. I hope all of you can appreciate that the Superintendent is shouldering the responsibility by suggesting a mandate that allows us to affect positive change for our students. Our master schedules and programs need to be about the children and not the adults. This proposal helps us as leaders reinforce that philosophy.

Today is kickoff and the political game has just begun. Remember, many times the political process loses sight of the kids and focuses on the adults. As your President, I will be happy to respond to your questions and concerns. My email and school phone are listed below. Please keep up the good work by continuing to advocate for our kids and colleagues.

Respectfully,

Mark Thomas, MASSP President

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